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LAND RESOURCES: SOIL LOSS

Text submitted by the Chairman on the basis of negotiations held on document A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.15

Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources

(Section II, chapter 2 of Agenda 21)

Below is the text of document A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.15 as it has been agreed in informal negotiations on 13 March 1992. The paragraphs in the introduction, basis for action and means for implementation have not been negotiated: language on these sections will be inserted later, based on the results of ongoing consideration of cross-sectoral issues.

INTRODUCTION

1. Land is normally defined as a physical entity in terms of its topography and spatial nature; a broader integrative view also includes natural resources: the soils, minerals, water and biota that the land comprises. These components are organized in ecosystems which provide a variety of services essential to the maintenance of the integrity of life-support systems and the productive capacity of the environment. Land resources are used in ways that take advantage of all these characteristics. Land is a finite resource, while the natural resources it supports can vary over time and according to management conditions and uses. Expanding human requirements and economic activities are placing ever increasing pressures on land resources,

creating competition and conflicts and resulting in suboptimal use of both land and land resources. If, in the future, human requirements are to be met in a sustainable manner, it is now essential to resolve these conflicts and move towards more effective and efficient use of land and its natural resources. Integrated physical and land-use planning and management is an eminently practical way to achieve this. By examining all uses of land in an integrated manner, it makes it possible to minimize conflicts, to make the most efficient trade-offs and to link social and economic development with environmental protection and enhancement, thus helping to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. The essence of the integrated approach finds expression in the coordination of the sectoral planning and management activities concerned with the various aspects of land use and land resources.

2. The chapter consists of one programme, "Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources", which deals with the reorganization and, where necessary, some strengthening of the decision-making structure, including existing policies, planning and management procedures and methods that can assist in putting in place an integrated approach to land resources. It does not deal with the operational aspects of planning and management, which are more appropriately dealt with under the relevant sectoral programmes. Since the programme deals with an important cross-sectoral aspect of decision-making for sustainable development, it is closely related to a number of other programmes that deal with that issue directly.

PROGRAMME AREA

A. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO THE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES

Basis for action

3. (Derived from para. 19) ‹Land resources are used for a variety of purposes which interact and may compete with each other; therefore it is desirable to plan and manage all uses in an integrated manner. Integration should take place at two levels, considering, on the one hand, all environmental, social and economic factors and, on the other, all environmental and resource components together (i.e., air, water, land, natural resources). Integrated consideration facilitates appropriate choices and trade offs, thus maximizing sustainable productivity and use. Opportunities to allocate land to different uses arise in the course of major settlement or development projects or in a sequential fashion as lands become available on the market›.

4. (Derived from para. 15) ‹A number of techniques, frameworks and processes can be combined to facilitate an integrated approach. They are the indispensable support for the planning and management process, at the national level, ecosystem or area levels and for the development of specific plans of action. Many of its elements are already in place, but need to be more widely

applied, further developed and strengthened›. This programme is concerned primarily with providing a framework that will coordinate decision-making; the content and operational functions are therefore not included here but are dealt with in the relevant sectoral programmes of Agenda 21.

Objectives

5. The broad objective is to facilitate allocation of land to the uses that provide the greatest sustainable benefits and to promote the transition to a sustainable and integrated management of land resources. In doing so, environmental, social and economic issues should be taken into consideration. Protected areas, private property rights, the rights of indigenous communities and the economic role of women in agriculture and rural development, among other issues, should be taken into account. In more specific terms, the objectives are to:

(a) Review and develop policies to support the best possible use of land and sustainable management of land resources, by not later than 1996;

(b) Improve and strengthen planning, management and evaluation systems for land and land resources, by not later than 2000;

(c) Strengthen institutions and coordinating mechanisms for land and land resources, by not later than 1998;

(d) Create mechanisms to facilitate the active involvement and participation of all concerned, particularly communities and people at the local level, in decision-making on land use and management, by not later than 1996.

Activities

Management-related

Develop supportive policies and policy instruments

6. Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of regional and international organizations, should ensure that policies and policy instruments support the best possible land use and sustainable management of land resources. Particular attention should be given to the role of agricultural land. To do this, they should:

(a) Develop integrated goal-setting and policy formulation at the national, regional and local levels which takes into account environmental, social, demographic and economic issues;

(b) Develop policies that encourage sustainable land use and management of land resources and take the land resource base, demographic issues and the interests of the local population into account;

(c) Review the regulatory framework, including laws, regulations and enforcement procedures, in order to identify improvements needed to support sustainable land use and management of land resources and restricts the transfer of productive arable land to other uses;

(d) Apply economic instruments and develop institutional mechanisms and incentives to encourage the best possible land use and sustainable management of land resources;

(e) Encourage the principle of delegating policy-making to the lowest level of public authority consistent with effective action and a locally driven approach.

Strengthen planning and management systems

7. Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of regional and international organizations, should review and, if appropiate, revise planning and management systems to facilitate an integrated approach. To do this, they should:

(a) Adopt planning and management systems that facilitate the integration of environmental components such as air, water, land and other natural resources, using approaches that focus on, for example, an ecosystem or a watershed;

(b) Adopt strategic frameworks that allow the integration of both developmental and environmental goals, such as sustainable livelihood systems, rural development, the World Conservation Strategy/Caring for the Earth, primary environmental care (PEC) and others;

(c) Establish a general framework for land-use and physical planning within which specialized and more detailed sectoral plans (e.g., for protected areas, agriculture, forests, human settlements, rural development) can be developed; establish intersectoral consultative bodies to streamline project planning and implementation;

(d) Strengthen management systems for land and natural resources by including apropriate traditional and indigenous methods;

(e) Examine and, if necessary, establish innovative and flexible approaches to programme funding;

(f) Compile detailed land capability inventories to guide sustainable land resources allocation, management and use at the national and local levels.

Promote application of appropriate tools for planning and management

8. Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of national and international organizations, should promote the improvement, further development and widespread application of planning and management tools that

facilitate an integrated and sustainable approach to land and resources. To do this, they should:

(a) Adopt improved systems for the interpretation and integrated analysis of data on land use and land resources;

(b) Systematically apply techniques and procedures for assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts, risks, costs and benefits of specific actions;

(c) Analyse and test methods to include land and ecosystem functions and land resources values in national accounts.

Raise awareness

9. Governments at the appropriate level, in collaboration with national institutions and interest groups and with the support of regional and international organizations, should launch awareness-raising campaigns to alert and educate people on the importance of integrated land and land resources management and the role that individuals and social groups can play in it. This should be accompanied by provision of the means to adopt improved practices for land use and sustainable management.

Promote public participation

10. Governments at the appropriate level, in collaboration with national organizations and with the support of regional and international organizations, should establish innovative procedures, programmes, projects and services that facilitate and encourage the active participation of those affected in the decision-making and implementation process, especially of groups that have, hitherto, often been excluded, such as women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities.

Data and information

Strengthen information systems

11. Governments at the appropiate level, in collaboration with national institutions and the private sector and with the support of regional and international organizations, should strengthen the information systems necessary for making decisions and evaluating future changes on land-use and management. The needs of both men and women should be taken into account. To do this, they should:

(a) Strengthen information, monitoring and assessment systems for environmental, economic and social data related to land resources at the global, regional, national and local levels and for land capability and land-use and management patterns;

(b) Strengthen coordination between existing sectoral data systems on land and land resources and strengthen national capacity to gather and assess data;

(c) Provide the appropriate technical information necessary for informed decision-making on land use and management in an accessible form to all sectors of the population, especially to local communities and women;

(d) Support low-cost, community-managed systems for the collection of comparable information on the status and processes of change of land resources, including soils, forest cover, wildlife, climate and other elements.

International and regional coordination and cooperation

Establish regional machinery

12. National Governments, with the support of regional and international organizations, should strengthen regional cooperation and exchange of information on land resources. To do this, they should:

(a) Study and design regional policies to support programmes for land-use and physical planning;

(b) Promote the development of land-use and physical plans in the countries of the region;

(c) Design information systems and promote training;

(d) Exchange, through networks and other appropriate means, information on experiences with the process and results of integrated and participatory planning and management of land resources at the national and local levels.

Means of implementation

[Financing and cost evaluation

Sources of funds and concessional financing

13. It is assumed that most costs will be borne by Governments as part of the regular planning and management process. It is suggested that technical cooperation funding from international sources be made available at an annual cost of about US$ 50 million.]

[Scientific and technological

Enhance scientific understanding of the land resources system

14. Governments, in collaboration with the national and international scientific community and with the cooperation of appropriate national and international organizations, should promote and support research on the land

resources system and the implications for sustainable development and management practices. Priority should be given to:

(a) (Derived from para. 19.a) ‹assessment of land capability and ecosystem functions›;

(b) (Derived from para. 19.b) ‹ecosystemic interactions and interactions between land resources and social, economic and environmental systems›;

(c) (Derived from para. 19.c) ‹develop indicators of sustainability for land resources, taking into account environmental, economic, social, demographic, cultural and political factors›.]

[Test research findings through pilot projects

15. Governments, in collaboration with the national and international scientific community and cooperation of the relevant international organizations, should (derived from para. 24.a) ‹research and test, through pilot projects, the applicability of improved approaches to the integrated planning and management of land resources, including technical, social and institutional factors›.]

[Human resources development

Enhance education and training

16. Governments, in collaboration with appropriate international institutions, should promote the development of the human resources that are required to plan and manage land and land resources sustainably and:

(a) (Derived from para. 23.b) ‹emphasize interdisciplinary and integrative approaches in the curricula of schools and technical, vocational and university training›;

(b) (Derived from para. 23.d) ‹train all relevant sectors concerned to deal with land resources in an integrated and sustainable manner›;

(c) (Derived from para. 23.g) ‹train communities, relevant extension services and NGOs on land management techniques and approaches applied successfully elsewhere›.]

[Capacity-building

Strengthen technological capacity

17. Governments, in cooperation with other Governments and relevant international organizations, should promote (para. 23 and 23.e) ‹focused and concerted efforts for education and training and transfer of techniques and technologies, [including biotechnologies,] that support the various aspects of the planning and management process at the national and local levels›.]

[Strengthen institutions

18. Governments, in cooperation with appropriate international organizations, should:

(Derived from paras. 20.a, 20.e, 21.b, 23.c)

‹(a) Revise the mandates of institutions that deal with land and natural resources to include explicitly the interdisciplinary integration of environmental, social and economic issues;

(b) Strengthen coordinating mechanisms between institutions that deal with land-use and resources management to facilitate integration of sectoral concerns and strategies;

(c) Strengthen local decision-making capacity and improve coordination with higher levels.›]